

McGILL UNIVERSITY



SPECIAL CONVOCATION

EIGHTH CONGRESS

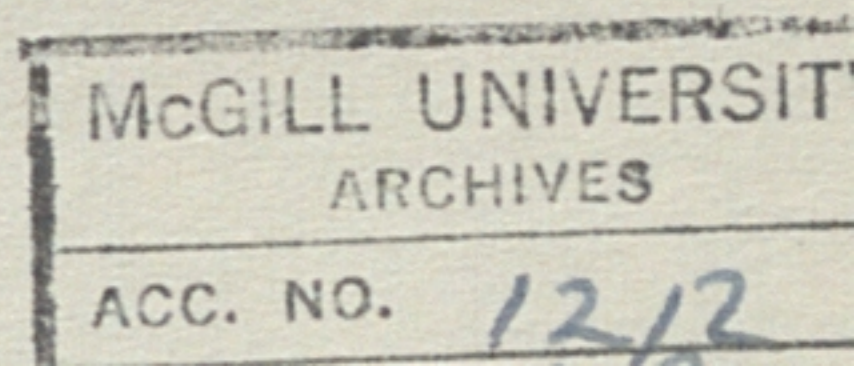
OF

THE UNIVERSITIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH



MONDAY, 1st SEPTEMBER, 1958

at 4:00 p.m.



EIGHTH CONGRESS OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The idea of an Imperial Universities Congress was born at the University of London in 1909. The universities of the United Kingdom responded with quick interest and enthusiasm. For here was a vision to fire the imagination: a community of scholars in congress, linked by family friendship and by common heritage and allegiance. As one result of the discussions which followed in Great Britain the Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the Home Universities Conference came into being.

The same quick enthusiasm burgeoned throughout the Empire. In Canada Principal Peterson convened a conference of Canadian university representatives at McGill in 1911. Then, in July 1912, the *First Congress of the Universities of the Empire* was formally opened in London. McGill's senior representative on that occasion was Lord Strathcona, "High Commissioner for Canada, Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen and of McGill University in Montreal". The Congress was an outstanding success; at the meetings the future functions and purpose of the Association were shaped and defined; the "Universities Bureau of the British Empire" — progenitor of the present energetic and effective body — was established and set in operation.

The First Congress decreed that henceforth meetings would be held every five years. The First World War grimly interrupted this arithmetic, but Congresses did take place as follows:

Second Congress 1921, Oxford

Third Congress 1926, Cambridge

Fourth Congress 1931, London and Edinburgh

Fifth Congress 1936, Cambridge

Again, however, an even grimmer war was to break the pattern of quinquennial meetings, and at the end of this upheaval the whole traditional concept of the British Empire had been altered. Canada, for instance, had weakened its ties with the Universities of the United Kingdom and grown closer to those of the United States. To some in that post-war epoch it seemed that the original vision, mint-bright in 1909, had lost its lustre and validity. A small group met at Oxford in 1947 to thrash the question out; and it was at once established that the vision retained all its importance, and that greater need than ever existed for its preservation. It is whispered that the Canadian delegates most forcefully advanced this conviction — into the presiding and willing ears of Sir Richard Livingston and Sir Hector Hetherington. As a result the Sixth Congress met at Oxford in 1948, and here was hammered out the shape the Association should assume in the future. The name was changed to *The Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth*; the overseas representatives were assigned roles of greater importance and responsibility; at that Congress representatives of the American Association of Universities attended for the first time. In its new context, with its new purpose, this Congress was as successful as the First Congress in 1912.

The Seventh Congress followed at Cambridge in 1953; purposes and methods of operation were firmly secured, and the Association moved forward to its present era of accomplishment.

Today — for the first time in history — The Association holds plenary session outside the United Kingdom. Today, for the first time also, the Executive Board of the International Association of Universities is given cordial welcome. It is fitting that Congress convenes today on the campus where Principal Peterson and his Canadian colleagues first glimpsed the vision born in 1909 and dedicated themselves to its achievement.

Order of Proceedings



1. **Music by the Band of the Royal Montreal Regiment.**

2. **Academic Procession.**

3. **Convocation Prayer:**

The Reverend E. Clifford Knowles, University Chaplain.

4. **The Principal.**

5. **Conferring the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws:**

ROBERT STEVENSON AITKEN, M.D., D.Phil., LL.D.,
D.Sc., F.R.C.P., F.R.A.C.P.,

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham.

JEAN BAUGNIET, DR. EN DROIT,

Honorary Rector of the University of Brussels.

CORNELIS WILLEM DE KIEWIET, M.A., PH.D., L.H.D.,
LL.D., LEGION OF HONOR,

President of the University of Rochester.

ERNST GIDEON MALHERBE, M.A., PH.D., LL.D.,

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Natal.

SIR ARCOT LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIAR, M.D., LL.D.,
D.Sc., D.LITT., D.C.L., F.R.C.O.G., F.A.C.S.,

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras.

STEPHEN HENRY ROBERTS, C.M.G., M.A., LITT.D.,
LL.D., D.Sc., (ECON.), D.C.L.,

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney.

Presented by Principal James.

6. **Response:**

Sir A. L. Mudaliar.

7. **Benediction.**



O Canada

God Save the Queen

The audience will please remain standing in their places until the academic procession has left.

